A Vacation from Grief?
By Margaret H. Gerner, MSW

Note: This is one viewpoint on vacations, we realize it may not reflect your experience.

Vacation time is here and everyone, including our voice within, says “it’ll do you good to get away.” Will it? The first time we went away after Arthur was killed was nine months later. I was in a deeply painful time of grief. I thought that getting away from the place where his absence screamed at me constantly would help. It didn’t.

I didn’t realize then that I was taking myself with me, carrying all the painful memories of his death and the terrible grief that consumed me. I expected the vacation to get me away from the pain. I was wrong.

Over the years, I have learned that you can’t take a vacation from grief, but there are ways of coping that will allow you to have at least some moments of enjoyment. The most important thing to remember is that your grief goes with you no matter where you go. Therefore, don’t expect too much, especially if this is your first vacation since your child died.

Plan on doing some grief work, because it will happen, whether your plan it or not. Allow time to pull into yourself if you are having a bad day. Give yourself permission to do what you feel like doing, even if it’s staying in your hotel room all day.

Know that your child will be on your mind just as he/she is at home. If this vacation is at a place that you and he/she enjoyed in the past, you will hurt because you know he/she would have enjoyed it. Either way, expect some painful moments…

If you are visiting relatives for the first time since the death, remember that they mean well even if they don’t mention your child or if they say insensitive things.

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Also, keep in mind that other family members on this vacation are hurting too. Plan some activity especially for them. Hopefully, some of the vacation will be enjoyable. For a short time, you may feel the peace that comes from hearing the waves rolling in from the ocean, or the peace that comes from some other pastoral scene.

You may actually laugh or have a good time doing something. Don’t let guilt over this enjoyment stop you from having some good moments. Give yourself permission to enjoy whatever your can. Your child would want you to.

Then, there’s the coming home. Don’t be surprised if this is really difficult. You may hurt more than you did before you left. On walking in the door you will again be faced with the knife sharp reality that he/she is no longer here. And, I think too, that at some deep level, many of us want to believe that he/she is at home. When of course, he/she is not, you are disappointed and hurt all over again.

Vacations, like every thing else in grief, are different now that your child is no longer with you. Do take a vacation. It is helpful and healthy to find a respite from grief, even if it is a short one. Keep in mind that over time, the pain of grief lessens. You won’t always feel as badly as you do today.

Vacations won’t always be painful. You will enjoy them again. In the meantime, take your vacation, feel sad when you need to and enjoy what/when you can.
Does your employer have a matching donation program?

Many employers sponsor matching donation programs to charitable organizations. Most programs match contributions dollar-for-dollar, doubling your gift-giving opportunity. Some employers also provide matching dollars for event participation. If you have ever donated or considered donating to SIDS Resources, please check with the HR department of your employer to find out if these matches are available. *Thanks in advance for your support!*

Enjoy the rest of your Summer!

This newsletter is made possible by a generous grant from the Employee Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis.
Remembering

The moment that you died, my heart was torn in two, one side filled with heartache, the other died with you.

I often lie awake at night, when the world is fast asleep, and take a walk down memory lane, with tears upon my cheeks.

Remembering you is easy, I do it every day, but missing you is heartache that never goes away.

I hold you tightly within my heart, and there you will remain. Until the joyous day arrives, That we will meet again.

~Unknown

Monthly Infant Loss Groups

Listed below are regular meeting times in each region. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. Please call to confirm time and location. Family members and friends are encouraged and welcome to attend.

Eastern Region
St. Louis

3rd Monday of the month at 7pm
SIDS Resources’ office
1120 S. 6th Street
St. Louis, MO 63104
Call Lori at 314-822-2323 or 1-800-421-3511

Western Region
Kansas City

4th Wednesday of the month at 6pm
Call Pete at 816-569-6956 for group location

South Central/SWest Region—Springfield area

Call Sara at 573-364-5900

If you want to connect with others who have experienced the sudden death of a baby, please consider joining our Facebook group. This internet support group is open only to families involved with SIDS Resources—no one else has access to this discussion board. You may share something about your child, your experience, or ask questions. Please email Sara at stamburrino@sidsresources.org and request to participate in the Facebook group.
Eastern Region
St. Louis

Sat. August 16th
Strides for SIDS
Creve Couer Park, St. Louis, MO
Please look on FaceBook for photos!

Western Region
Kansas City

Divine Run re-cap
We extend our sincere gratitude to Kathy and Kirk Hance for coordinating this wonderful event which raised over $20,000.00!

South Central/SWest Region – Springfield

Fri. Sept. 14th
Healthy Baby Event
Eugene Northern Community Hall
Rolla, MO
To register call 573-368-4755

Fri. September 19th
Strike out SIDS at the K
Kauffman Stadium, Kansas City, MO
For more info. or to register:
http://www.sidsresources.org/?page_id=1527

North Central
Jefferson City/Columbia

If you are interested in participating or volunteering in one of our events, please call 1-800-421-3511

Quarterly Update Summer 2014
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This publication is published quarterly—Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. We won’t be mailing the updates, however all updates are available on our website, or we can email it to you, which helps us realize significant cost savings.

If you don’t have internet access or email, please contact your Program Coordinator and we’ll work to make other arrangements. We appreciate your understanding.

If for any reason you would like to be removed from this mailing, please call 1-800-421-3511 or email Lori at lbehrens@sidsresources.org

To access support services for bereaved families, or to schedule a SIDS training for professional and community groups, please call 1-800-421-3511 or contact your regional SIDS Resources’ office.

www.sidsresources.org